

Candy Barr: Center stage for a night

By THOM MARSHALL

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Getting to talk with Candy Barr nowadays is like finally getting a date with the prettiest girl in high school and discovering that, after you've dragged Main Street so all your buddies could see the two of you together, and just when you're heading for that parking spot by the lake, she's ready to go home.

The famous former stripper and still baby-faced ex-con is pleasant enough to chit-chat with, but she won't get down to business. There have been too many front page headlines over stories she didn't like. And the days are long past when publicity helped fill the clubs where she stripped.

Candy's quieter now.

She was in Dallas Tuesday night to present an award at the annual Buddy Magazine's Texas Music Awards program, and she limited her conversation to the present tense.

"Listen to that base drive," she said, moving rhythmically in appreciation.

There's more of Candy now than the 119 pounds she revealed when she got her start in Dallas clubs. Her face is still pretty and smooth, and she still wears her blonde hair long.

She has pretty teeth, too, but she admitted they aren't all original. And she wears glasses now.

"I love them," she said, putting the large, round lenses over her sparkling green eyes. "I just wear them to read, though."

Her figure ... well, there has been some settling. After all, she's 45 or thereabouts (she won't say). But she's still curvey.

Candy avoided talk of her celebrated past — the 1950s, when she was



— Staff photo by Jay Dickman

See CANDY on Page 6

Candy Barr prepares to announce winner of music award

CANDY — From Metro Page

paid as much as \$2,000 a week for stripping in front of Las Vegas audiences, or when she was busted in Dallas for possession of a small amount of marijuana and a Dallas County jury handed her a stiff 15-year prison sentence. She served more than three years before winning her release.

"You're not going to bring up all that junk, are you?" she asked.

There was a tone of bitterness there but she refused to elaborate beyond a quick comment about the prosecutors and judges who put her behind bars.

"Let them live with their consciences," she said. "My conscience is clear."

She wouldn't even talk much about

her life of the past several years in a little house on the edge of Lake Brownwood. Friends there say Candy's like anyone else. They say she leads a quiet life and keeps to herself.

She has a grown daughter from one of her four unsuccessful marriages, and reportedly she has at least one grandchild. But she just wouldn't talk about her personal life.

Her eyes scanned the crowd in the huge ballroom, looking for familiar faces, and she left her table often to visit with friends, many of whom were older men.

She said she was nervous about presenting the award, but it didn't show when it came time for her appearance. She walked briskly, smiling and waving, to the podium.

Her part in the program took only

two or three minutes. She announced the nominees for The Best Rock-Pop record, "Steve Miller . . . J.D. Souther . . . Point Blank . . . that hunk of stuff, ZZ Top," and then she announced the winner . . . "ZZ Top."

That was it. No bumps, no grinds, not a single button undone on the conservative beige dress that covered her from mid-neck to boot top.

After her part of the program concluded, she accepted some invitations to dance. Nothing like the kind of dancing that made her famous. Just another pretty partner on the crowded dance floor.

But it was obvious that she enjoyed it.

"I was raised on the waltz, the two-step, the polka, all of them," she said. "There's nothing I haven't done."